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School Committee Minutes 10-28-2003

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2003
7:30 PM

Present: Suzanne Owayda, Chair Sue Sheffler
 Paul Schlichtman, Vice Chair Jeff Thielman
 Joani LaMachia, Secretary Martin Thrope
 Barbara Goodman

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Chief Financial Officer: Rob Addelson
Asst. Supt. Curriculum: Joanne Gurry
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Call to order: 7:35 PM

Chair, Suzanne Owayda introduced and welcomed Rob Addelson as the Chief Financial Officer of Arlington Public Schools. Ms. Owayda also reminded the audience that 20 minutes is allotted for public participation and that under policy the School Committee is allowed only to take under advisement any matters presented before them.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Virginia Fuller, AEA President addressed the Committee relative to the lack of a contract for teachers. Ms. Fuller emphasized that Arlington placed in the top 16% in MCAS, has increasing SAT scores, has improved property values, and that teachers have spent their own money to provide supplies for their students. Ms. Fuller asked for the School Committee's support and long term commitment to increase salaries and retain quality staff.

Sheldon Obelsky, AHS Social Studies teacher spoke on how increased class size has impacted his classes. There are five more desks in his already crowded classroom. Mr. Obelsky has had to scale back on the number assignments given due to the sheer lack of time to correct and to give students feedback on the papers. Mr. Obelsky felt that he is not providing the same service or quality of education to students this year compared to the education his students received 2 years ago despite his best efforts.

Linda Verrity, 4th grade teacher at Thompson school explained that with 27 students in her class it takes approximately 4 hours to grade student work. Additionally she cannot cover the frameworks in a timely manner and is already two weeks behind where she should be at this point in the year.

Janice Bakey presented the School Committee with a book **The Charles Evers Story** by author Charles Evers and Andrew Szanton.

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

Supt. Donovan, Special Education Director Marilyn Bisbicos and CFO Rob Addelson reviewed and explained the Circuit Breaker Residential Tuition Update.

DISCUSSION ON SCHOOL CAPACITY/REDISTRICTING

Chair, Suzanne Owayda led the discussion with a review of a **1993 Facilities Report assumptions/implications** and inquired if the Committee is looking to work with some of the same suggested actions.

Those attending the discussion included elementary principals, the Director of Reading, the Title 1 Director,

Director of the METCO program and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee.

Topics discussed included:

- .. The ideal class size for the primary grades - 18-20 students
- .. Equity in all school buildings
- .. School Committee policy on Facilities Planning Enrollment Projections (File FA/FB/FBB)
- .. Commitment to small class size K-2 and 3-5
- .. Time frame on redistricting and the criteria to be used
- .. How large class size effects the way a lesson is taught
- .. Financial trade offs of increasing class size and being able to offer more programs
- .. The consideration of creating 3 mini districts (i.e. Bishop/Stratton, Hardy/Thompson) and having the principals work together to balance out school population

Ms. Owayda requested from Supt. Donovan a break down on total number of regular classroom and special education rooms currently in use, and also a break down of using the NESDEC figures of 20 students per class grades for K-2 and 23 students per class for grades 3-5.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REAPPOINTMENTS

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously

Voted to reappoint for a three-year term, Christine Carney, William Shea, Marissa Shea Briggett and A. Nick Minton as School Committee representatives to the Human Rights Commission.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Warrant Approval

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously

Voted to approve warrant number 04047 in the amount of \$249,615.26

FIELD TRIP APPROVAL

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously

Voted approval of the Superintendent's recommendation for a field trip proposal to Spain April 14 – 24, 2003 by the Spanish class with the provision that should conditions warrant, we reserve the right to revoke the vote.

Supt. Donovan stated that she would direct the teachers to obtain a contract in writing and recommends that all participants purchase adequate insurance.

New Business

Ms. Owayda explained to Committee Members that the school committee meeting agenda of November 4th has changed; the meeting was to primarily focus on district goals, however it was requested that that item be placed on a later agenda. Suzanne will instead have a discussion of the FY2004 Budget Book.

.. Policy & Procedures subcommittee will meet November 3rd at 4:00 PM

.. The Budget Subcommittee will meet next on December 3rd at 7:00 PM

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous

EXECUTIVE SESSION 10:35 – 11:00 PM

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously

Voted to adjourn @ 11:00 PM

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary